

The Sun

MONDAY, AUGUST 30, 1886.

Announcements To-day.

Hop Open House—Salad and sweetbreads. **EP. M.**
Cassino—Kreide. **EP. M.**
Cyclospore—Bath and dressing. **Star and Mirror.**
Red Wunder—Dress and West. **EP. M.**
Grand Opera House—Vivian. **EP. M.**
Burgess Park Theatre—Investigation. **EP. M.**
Master & Smith—Mincing. **EP. M.**
Lee Av. Academy, Brooklyn—Portuguese. **EP. M.**
Madison Square Theatre—Held by the Faculty. **EP. M.**
New Central Park Garden—Gardens. **EP. M.**
People's Theatre—Jac. Fink. **EP. M.**
Phantom—Rhythms, and 5004.
Star Theatre—Yvette Lavee. **EP. M.**
Tony Pastor's Theatre—Dudu Nata. **EP. M.**
Wise Theatre—Drapes sold by Mrs. Shuster. **EP. M.**
2d Avenue Theatre—Cabinet houses. **EP. M.**

The Prohibitionists and the State Constitution.

In reference to our advocacy of a Constitutional Convention in order definitely to settle the question of liquor prohibition, the *Baldwin Courier* has this to say:

"We are not in favor of the existing practice, whatever and whenever it comes on, we hope that it will be reserved for special consideration upon its own merits and not be connected with other amendments to the State Constitution. We certainly do not wish to embarrass our political opponents at the risk of having needed constitutional reforms defeated or delayed."

No difficulty need arise such as our esteemed contemporary suggests. There is nothing to prevent the Convention from submitting a prohibitory amendment to a vote of the people, separate and distinct from any other articles which may be proposed. This was done in the case of the judiciary article in 1866, and that was the only portion of the work of the Convention which was finally approved by the electors.

In our judgment no question can come before a Constitutional Convention upon which people have clearer or more decided views, one way or the other, than this question of prohibiting the manufacture and sale of alcoholic drinks. It is an issue which can be made, and undoubtedly will be made, prominent in the election of delegates to the Convention, if one is ordered—much more prominently than it could be in the ordinary election of members of the Legislature. And then the action of a Constitutional Convention will settle it, for twenty years at least, in all human probability. Whatever statutory reform may be effected thereafter—whether by means of high license or otherwise—there will be no serious talk about a prohibitory article in the Constitution for a long time to come, if the Prohibitionists fail in this Convention. On the other hand, if they succeed in having a prohibitory article recommended for adoption, the prospects of an approval by the people might be bright indeed—for if the Prohibitionists should elect a majority of the delegates to the Convention, their popular strength must needs be great.

A wholesale revision of our State Constitution is not needed, and under ordinary circumstances the process of amendment through the Legislature is more conducive to the healthy growth and natural development of our institutions than any sudden and extensive alteration of the fundamental law. But a settlement of the prohibitory liquor question by a Constitutional Convention is, nevertheless, greatly to be desired.

Which Will Have the Next Senator?

Which party will elect the Senator in Congress to succeed WARREN MILLER? The present State Senate consists of 20 Republicans and 12 Democrats, giving the former a majority of 8. To overcome this the Democrats must elect a majority of at least 9 in the Assembly that is to be chosen this fall. In other words, they must elect at least 9 members. This, with their present 12 Senators, would give them the requisite 21 votes on joint ballot. If they succeed it must be through the ballot, because, of course, the Republican Senate will nominate a Republican in the first instance, who can only be beaten by the ballot in the joint session.

Can the Democrats elect the 6 Assemblymen? They have 50 members in the present Assembly. Can they this fall make a gain of 12? This would be extraordinary. They have had an absolute majority in the Assembly only five times since the Republican party was organized. If they fail to elect the next Senator an event will happen which we believe has not yet occurred in the history of the Government. The President will not have a Senator of his own party from his own State during his term of office.

The Great Obstacle to a Rise in Wages.

In common with most of the community, our sympathies are entirely with the efforts now making in various quarters to raise the wages of workingmen. Of all commodities sold in the market labor is that which every one instinctively feels ought to bring the highest possible price, and that what price is can only be ascertained by the sellers of, demanding continually more and more for it, until the limit of the purchasers' ability to pay is reached.

Since, too, the market cannot be fairly tested by single transactions, there must be concert of action among the sellers, and sometimes a stoppage of the supply, which is called a strike. When workingmen strike for higher wages they do exactly what a merchant does who marks up his goods and refuses to part with them for less than he asks. Sometimes they fail in their attempt, just as the merchant does, but without the attempt they would not know that they were getting the full value of their commodity. Of course, employers and those who sympathize with them regard strikes with aversion, and talk of them as they would of riots and rebellions; but this is pure silliness.

Without going into all the complicated details of demand and supply upon which the result of the present movement for a rise in wages depends, we desire to call attention to a great and, as it appears to us, a fatal obstacle to its success. This obstacle is the malnutrition of gold as the standard measure of value, for which our financiers are so obstinately struggling. With diminishing prices for all kinds of staple commodities resulting from the continual rise in the exchangeable value of gold, with wheat, corn, cotton, wool, iron, copper, butter, cheese, and food of all kinds lower than they have been for thirty-five years past, it seems to us impossible that wages can generally advance. Indeed, they are higher now than could reasonably be expected, and it may change takes place it is more likely to be in the direction of a fall than of a rise.

Evidently, in the face of this steady decline of commodities and the corresponding rise of the value of money, nobody is anxious to borrow money and invest it in producing new commodities. Men who did this one, two, three, or ten years ago find themselves in consequence worse off today than when they began. Their fate discourages others, and thus fresh enterprises are undertaken reluctantly, and only when exceptionally large profits seem probable. Meanwhile, our population is growing by its own natural increase, as well as by accessions from

abroad. The number of the unemployed among us, which some months ago was estimated at a million, must be now still greater. When the Broadway Railroad men struck the other day, they discovered that there were plenty of applicants for their vacant places, and they speedily concluded not to risk a further trial of the market. It is true that their work is of a kind that does not take many days to learn, and workers at trades are not exposed to so extensive and prompt a competition; but their experience is instructive, nevertheless. It shows that the labor market is fully supplied, with a tendency to an overstock. Under these conditions it is difficult, if not impossible, for wages to advance.

If we could only throw overboard the gold standard and frankly and fully admit that of silver, business would be relieved of the fetters which now restrain it, and new enterprises would spring up to increase the demand for labor, and thus to increase the market value. Borrowers would no longer be deterred, as they are now, by the fear of having to pay back vastly more in value than they borrow, but would have the assurance of being able to keep the legitimate profits of their undertakings. Lenders, too, would be benefited, because they would get a higher rate of interest, and while they might lose a little in the diminished purchasing power of their capital, they would receive returns from it enough to more than compensate them for the difference.

The gold standard is not only detrimental to workingmen, by being an obstacle to a rise in wages, but it injures the capitalist by checking the employment of capital. Society is a unit, and an injury to one portion is an injury to the whole.

Do We Own Behring's Sea?

Capt. ANTHONY of the revenue cutter Corwin has reported that the British schooners Thornton and Caroline were seized while killing for seals in the Pacific, sixty-miles southeast of St. George's Island, and the British schooner onward, one hundred and twenty miles from the same island.

The section of the Revised Statutes under which these seizures are made was framed in the interest and for the protection of the Government's tonnage in the Seal Islands, the Alaska Commercial Company:

"No person shall kill any seal, sea lion, monk seal, or seal, or other fur-bearing animal within the limits of Alaska Territory, or in the waters thereof; and every person guilty thereof shall, for each offence, be fined not more than \$200 or more than \$1,000 or imprisoned not more than six months, or both, and all vessels used in violation of this section shall be forfeited."

What are the waters of Alaska Territory? This phrase, together with the phrase, "and the adjacent waters," occurs frequently in the laws relating to Alaska.

These laws, and the Executive orders based thereon, rest upon the treaty of 1867, by which we acquired Alaska from Russia. The western boundaries of that purchase are thus defined in the treaty:

"The western limit, within which the territories and dominions conveyed are contained, passes through a line drawn from the south end of Behring's Strait to the point of 153° 30' north latitude, at which point it turns westward, and midway between the island of Kamtschatka and the island of Ushuaia or Navarino, and thence, northward, with a turn inland into the Frozen ocean."

"The same western limit, beginning at the same in time, passes through those in a course nearly southward, separating a strait and Behring's Sea, so as to leave a narrow strip of land between the coast of St. Lawrence and the westernmost tip of Cap. Chukchi to the meridian of 172° west longitude, from the intersection of that meridian, in a southwesterly direction, so as to pass midway between the island of Atto and the Copper Island of the Koura,スクラ島, couplet or group in the North Pacific Ocean, to the meridian of 167° west longitude, so as to include in the territory conveyed the whole of the Aleutian Islands east of that meridian."

A glance at the map will make this intelligible. The Aleutian Islands run out pretty well to the Asiatic coast. Very few people appreciate the fact that the westernmost point of United States territory, in the mainland, is nearly as far west of San Francisco, measuring by degrees of longitude, as New York is west of San Francisco. The western limit of the territory acquired from Russia, namely, the island of Atto, is almost as far west of Sitka as Sitka is west of New York.

Roughly stated, then, the treaty conveyed to the United States dominion over nearly all of the ocean north of the Aleutian Islands. The boundary line as drawn on the map in accordance with the demarcation of the treaty runs southwest from Behring's Strait along the Siberian and Kamtschatkan coast, including a vast body of water considerably larger than the Mediterranean Sea and between twice and three times as big as the Gulf of Mexico.

It was in this ocean region that the British schooners were seized for violating the laws of the United States relative to the capture of fur seals. They were sixty-five miles in one course, and 120 miles in the other, distant from the nearest land. Nevertheless, according to our laws, and according to the treaty by which we acquired Alaska, they were within the limits of the United States.

But will Great Britain or any other foreign power except Russia recognize our right to exercise dominion over this vast ocean region in the North Pacific? Will any foreign power recognize Russia's right, in the first instance, to convey the greater part of Behring's Sea to the United States by sale? It, under international law, we have the right to prohibit British fishermen from taking fur seals one hundred and twenty miles from land, have we not the same right to prohibit British or Norwegian whalers from taking whales within the same seas?

These are very interesting and important questions; and the seizure by Capt. A. of the Canadian schooners from Victoria brings our treaty rights to dominion in their regard into dispute, and talk of them as they would of riots and rebellions; but this is pure silliness.

A More Powerful Mayor.

There is reason to believe that it would be a great improvement in our system of municipal government to make the terms of various heads of departments nearly commensurate with the Mayor's term of office.

Suppose each incoming Mayor were allowed to appoint at once the principal commissioners for a term of two years, subject to the right on his part to remove them at any time without assigning any cause, and simply by appointing in each case a successor who should hold office, subject to the same condition, to the end of the term for which the original appointment was made.

The three cities whose names are selected for the three clerks next to be built, according to the system of nomenclature adopted by the Navy Department, will have more cause for pride than the first three. The 3,730-ton cruiser which is to be a duplicate of the swift *Nanwan-Kan*, will be known as the *Charleston*; the *Lithgow* cruiser designed by the bureaus, the *Nashville*; the 4,000-ton cruiser built on plan No. 27 of the series of competitive English designs offered to the Spanish Government, will be called the *Baltimore*, *Atlanta*, *Boston*, and *Chicago*. He had the honor of being first chosen in the christening of the new steel navy, but these namesakes will probably be very slow to merit with the fast set of three. We dare say that *London*, *Easton*, and *Fishkill* will hardly be ready to suggest that names like these have been chosen for the three new cruisers which will have faster speeds than the pre-war alphabetical arrangement started under Mr. Chasman.

International instruction in outdoor sports, on the competitive plan, is still going on briskly. The Birmingham gentlemen have explained to the Westchester Club what they know about polo. The American canoeists have given some account of their new game in canoeing. The Belfast visitors have learned something from New York and more from Canada on the game of lacrosse. The

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